

Landcare matters

Lake Clifton Sub-catchment



PHCC Working Together
Peel-Harvey Catchment Council

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Welcome to Landcare Matters: Newsletter of the Lake Clifton Stewardship Program – a program supporting landowners for healthy habitats and waterways in the Lake Clifton catchment.

2022, seedling giveaway a big hit

June 2022's Lake Clifton Seedling Giveaway saw more landholders attending than any year in its history. A total of 80 landholders, from 54 separate properties, 6 PHCC staff or volunteers and more than 10 presenters/stall holders took part in a great morning, despite the rain and grey skies.

Among the presentations, the Peel-Harvey Biosecurity Group provided great information about rabbit control, and hosted a stall on declared weeds and pests. C-Wise presented and hosted a stall on soil health and how compost can help improve revegetation on your property. C-Wise also donated 10 bags of their premium soil conditioner

'Humicarb', which was raffled off to 10 lucky participants at the end of the event. Mandurah Wildlife Rehabilitation hosted a stall highlighting their work and provided advice about dealing with injured wildlife on your property. They also brought along the beautiful 'Mr Blue, the Little Roo'. PHCC presented on our 'Banksia World for Woodlands' and 'Ramsar' Projects. Jenny Rose spoke on the Lake Clifton/Herron Landcare Group and provided a brief outline of the species provided at the giveaway and best techniques for planting.

All species that were part of the seedling giveaway were carefully selected, being common to Tuart and Banksia Woodlands

in the Lake Clifton area and favourite foraging plants for Black Cockatoos. A big thank you to all presenters, stall holders, volunteers from the Lake Clifton/Herron Landcare Group and all landholders who attended for your interest in improving native vegetation on their property. Thanks also to the City of Mandurah, for donating an additional 500 peppermint tree seedlings.

We will evaluate all the feedback from this year's giveaway that will go toward planning for future events.

Local landholders, stall holders and PHCC staff at the Seedling Giveaway



Workshopping local bushland weeds



Bronwen and Greg demonstrating how to identify bushland weeds and control their spread

Over 20 landholders registered for a recent weed workshop event and, although many landholders could not attend due to COVID or flu, those that attended found the event informative and engaging, learning new skills on how to identify and manage local weeds.

The Banksia and Tuart Woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain, including those in the Lake Clifton area, contribute towards the beautiful and biodiverse landscapes that we live in. They provide habitat for native fauna and support an incredibly diverse flora. Impacts of environment weeds is one of the major threats facing these bushland areas. Weeds can displace our native species, altering not only the diversity and interactions of the flora, but also its value for the fauna as a food source and habitat.

Properly identifying and understanding weeds is important for protecting bushland, however, identifying and controlling weeds is no easy feat. It requires time, determination, financial support, skills in plant identification and a basic understanding of the biology and ecology of local weeds. To increase landholder's knowledge of local problematic weeds and discuss best practice weed control options for dealing with them, PHCC held a 2-hour workshop on the 25th of May at the Lake Clifton Community Centre. This weed workshop was presented by weed and native plant experts, Greg Keighery and Bronwen Keighery.

The first half of the workshop included a presentation from Greg Keighery about weed issues, which included:

- Old persistent problem weeds
- New and emerging crop and environmental weeds
- Some eradication/containment successes
- New issues such as hybridisation, genetic pollution, genetically modified plants
- New players and 'loss' of players, and keeping on-top of alerts for Weeds of National Significance
- Climate Change
- Roadside plantings and invasion of remnant patches of bushland

- Weedy or native – when native's become weeds
- Resources including handy books.

An interactive demonstration helped provide tips to weed identification, as it can often be challenging to identify weeds from native species, as shown in the images below of native *Oxalis exilis* and the exotic weed, *Oxalis corniculata*. The Keighery's explained the biology of different weed species, and how it relates to dispersal, spread, control and management of weeds. Thank-you to Bronwen and Greg Keighery, and all landholders that attended, for making this workshop a success, and for your genuine interest in bushland conservation.

Exotic weed species are often mistaken for native species. Images of *Oxalis* species presented by Greg Keighery at the workshop - the *Oxalis* on the left is a weed and the *Oxalis* on the right is a native.



Weed: *Oxalis corniculata*



Native: *Oxalis exilis*

Lake Clifton a hotspot for threatened critters

To better understand the activity of rarely seen wildlife inhabiting Banksia Woodlands in coastal areas of the Peel-Harvey catchment, PHCC recently purchased several trail cameras for targeted fauna survey and monitoring. These cameras were set up at properties from Point Grey to Coolup.

To improve detection rates and quality of footage, consideration was given to camera placements, habitats and behaviour of target species. Large trees with hollows, water sources and animal tracks were surveyed, with the addition of universal bait as lures in other areas.

We have already detected a range of conservation significant species, including Forest Red Tail Black Cockatoos, Quenda, Brush Tail Phascogales and Ringtail Possums.



The **South-western Brown Bandicoot** (*Isodon obesulus fusciventer*), known by the noongar name Quenda, are ground dwelling marsupials, ranging in size from 300mm to 360mm, with short tails. Quendas are sometimes misidentified as introduced rats, however unlike introduced rats,

Quenda play an important ecosystem role in turning soil and thereby aerating and recycling nutrients and spreading fungi and seeds. Quenda diggings are cone-shaped, making them easily distinguished from rabbit or kangaroo diggings.



South-western Brown Bandicoot (Anna Nowicki)

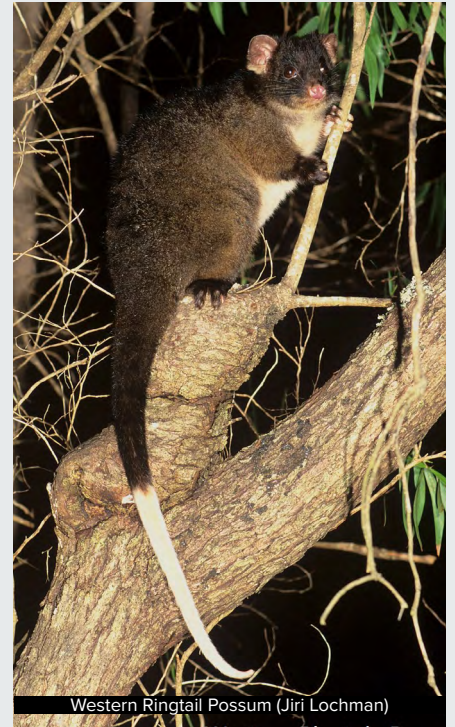
South-western Brush-tailed Phascogales (*Phascogale tapoatafa wambenger*), noongar name Wambenger, are small marsupials which are arboreal, meaning they spend the majority of their time in trees. They feed on large insects, spiders and flower nectar during the night. Wambenger require hollows to sleep in during the day and leave their young in while looking for food. Artificial nest boxes can be erected to provide a substitute for natural hollows. The biggest threats to Wambenger are lack of connected and dense vegetation, competition for hollows by bees and predation by cats and foxes.



Brush-tailed Phascogale (R. Lloyd/Fauna Track)

The **Western Ringtail Possum** (*Pseudocheirus occidentalis*), Koomal in noongar, is Critically Endangered. Their diet consists of Eucalypt, Marri and Peppermint leaves, blossoms and soft fruit. Koomal live in hollows as well as 'dreys' which are nests built out of foliage. Artificial nest boxes can be provided to encourage Koomal to

make homes on your property. Foxes and cats are large threats to both brush-tailed and ring-tailed possums and should be controlled to protect both species.



Western Ringtail Possum (Jiri Lochman)

The threatened species data we are collecting through our fauna camera's contribute to broader knowledge through addition to state databases.

We have also recorded numerous invasive species, including feral cats, foxes, black rats and the declared sulphur crested cockatoo.

Detection of the significant numbers of invasive species, helps to inform pest management programs and habitat improvement actions, and the records of declared sulphur crested cockatoos helps DPIRD with their control program.

If you think you have any interesting fauna and have Banksia Woodlands, or are a Land for Wildlife member, please contact PHCC to enquire about loaning and assistance with setting up fauna cameras on your property.

Reference:
DBCA - Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (2022) Threatened and Priority Fauna Database Search for Lake Clifton. Accessed on 4 April 2022

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